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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001280

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FOR PM/WRA STEPHANIE PICO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2016

TAGS: PARM PREL JA UNGA

SUBJECT: TOKYO SMALL ARMS WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON DEMAND

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. The MOFA-sponsored March 12-13 workshop on small arms and light weapons (SALW) shared best practices in addressing SALW among the participants, according to MOFA Conventional Arms Division Officer Michiko Makino. Discussions focused on demand reduction and arms transfer issues, with attendees agreeing to develop a comprehensive approach to demand reduction. MOFA believes the SALW workshop laid the groundwork for subsequent workshops to be sponsored by Germany and Canada. End summary.

¶2. (C) MOFA Conventional Arms Officer Michiko Makino briefed Embassy political officer on March 22 on the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): "SALW Issues from the Perspective of the Protection and Empowerment of the Peaceful Community," which Japan hosted March 12-13. The workshop attracted 26 representatives from 18 governments, as well as members of 29 organizations and research institutes. (Note: A set of papers distributed at the workshop has been faxed to PM/WRA.) Embassy political officer attended parts of the workshop on both days.

¶3. (C) Workshop participants shared experiences and best practices in addressing small arms and light weapons, focusing on demand factors and transfer control &from the perspective of protecting and empowering the peaceful community,⁸ according to Makino. Pointing to accomplishments achieved during the workshop, Makino noted that attendees agreed to develop a comprehensive approach in reducing demand. Participants also noted that weapons collection efforts are not the only solution - they depend on the background and specific "environment" of the particular community.

¶4. (C) The workshop urged the international community to take concerted action through the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), Makino continued. The ATT by itself will not end the arms trade, but will set clear standards and help participants to reach agreement on when arms transfers should not be approved. Makino added that participants emphasized that the Program of Action (PoA) remains in place and remains the primary

international agreement on SALW.

¶ 15. (C) Discussion on day one focused primarily on demand. South Africa representative Fatima Nagdee-Hajaig urged participants to think about the link between resources and small arms proliferation. Donor aid should address development needs, because poor individuals would not give up selling arms as long as they need food, she said. Dr. Owen Greene, Director of Research in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, called on participants to: 1) conduct additional assessments about the kinds of programs needed to address demand issues, 2) share & lessons learned⁸ about experiences dealing with demand, including arms transfer in border communities, and 3) dispel long-standing myths about the role of "gun culture" in determining demand. Many societies use guns simply to keep the "elite" class in power, he noted. Echoing those comments, Makino said that there was no best way to reduce demand for small arms, because each community has its own set of demand factors, some of which include real threats to life and security.

¶ 16. (C) Makino characterized the workshop as "successful" in addressing a variety of issues relating to illicit transfer of small arms. MOFA believes the seminar will prepare the groundwork for workshops hosted by Germany (May 2007) and Canada (August 2007), leading up to the Biennial Meeting of States in 2008.

SCHIEFFER